



## Mrs. Helen L. (Thompson) Harrington

October 15, 1935 - June 8, 2024

N. UTICA – Mrs. Helen L. (Thompson) Harrington, age 88, passed away in the comfort and dignity of her own home on Saturday, June 8, 2024.

Born in Rome, NY on October 15, 1935, Helen was the daughter of the late Charles and Marion (Robinson) Thompson. She was a graduate of St. Francis de Sales High School-Class of 1953. Later in life, she continued her education at MVCC.

On July 3, 1953, Helen married John Richard “Dick” Harrington, whom she met at a New Year’s Eve party. The two of them always got along well and were a great team. They possessed the ability to support and rely on one another. Mutual respect was a cornerstone of their foundation. They shared nearly 71 years of marriage.

Right out of high school, Helen entered the workforce, but set that aside to raise her children before going back to work when they were all in school. She held a number of positions before accepting employment with Utica National Insurance Group. She began as a file clerk and transitioned to underwriting in the bond department.

“Though she be little, she be fierce.” There was nothing Helen wouldn’t do for her family. She was resilient and kind, truly always willing and happy to help.

She was involved in her church, community, and in her children's activities. She was a proud member of the New Hartford American Legion Post 1376 Ladies Auxiliary. She volunteered with Catholic Charities as one of their "Pillow Ladies" at St. Elizabeth Medical Center, sewing heart-shaped pillows for those recovering from heart surgery. She joined the Quilt Club in New Hartford; St. Mark's Altar Rosary Society and children's choir; taught religion; was a Cub Scout Den mother; and a PTA room mother. She possessed a creative spirit. From seamstress, to painting, to crafting her talents were many. Her energy seemed endless. Helen used her skills for sewing, knitting, painting, quilting, crocheting, and gardening. But raising her five children was her biggest and proudest accomplishment. Her organizational skills allowed her and Dick to successfully raise their family. Her humor, smile, and laugh will never be forgotten.

Helen's family will always remember the Harrington Family Holiday Parties, especially her love of Easter. Her family cherishes the time she spent arranging Easter festivities and egg hunts for her grandchildren.

Her Catholic faith was a guide in her life. Helen and Dick were founding members and parishioners of St. Mark's Church beginning in 1964.

Helen is survived by her beloved husband, Dick; her children and their spouses, Susan and Michael Dolan, Michael Harrington and his wife Patricia Manley, Gail and Richard Hanss, Richard and Laurie Harrington, and Judy and Steve Horvath. She also is fondly remembered by her grandchildren and their loves: Laura and Chase Hunter, Sarah and Wayne Schumaker; Natalie Harrington and her husband Alex Wagner, Madeline Harrington and her fiancé Jordyn Purpura; Brian Horvath; Emily and Ari Kramer, Jacob Hanss and his wife Emily Roesch, and Joseph Hanss; and her great-grandchildren, who affectionately called her "GG": Caleb and Cayden Hunter, Jenna and Ryan Schumaker, and Ruby Hanss. She was happily anticipating the arrival of her

sixth great-grandchild. She is also survived by her sister and brother-in-law, Mabel and Charles "Chuck" Kimball. She held close to her heart the memory of her brother who predeceased her in his childhood, Richard "Dickie" Thompson. She will further be remembered by several nieces, nephews, and their families. She was additionally predeceased by her in-laws, Merton "Bud" and June Harrington, and Shirley and Francis O'Brien.

The family will honor and commemorate her life at a private time. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend Helen's Mass of Christian Burial and Celebration of Life, which will commence on Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Mark's Church, 440 Keyes Rd. There will be an opportunity to greet the family at the conclusion of Mass.

Memorial contributions in Helen's name may be made to Hospice and Palliative Care of New Hartford at <https://hospicecareinc.org/donate-online/> or the Alzheimer's Association, Central New York Chapter at [www.alz.org/centralnewyork](http://www.alz.org/centralnewyork). Envelopes will also be available at the service. Interment will take place in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

## Cemetery Details

### **Mt. Olivet Cemetery**

Whitesboro, NY

## Previous Events

### **Funeral Service**

JUN **13**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Mark's Church  
440 Keyes Road  
Utica, NY 13502

# Tribute Wall

RS

“ *Harrington Family,*

*Veronica and I were very sorry to hear about the passing of your beloved wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, sister-in-law and aunt, Helen.*

*We have added you and your family to our daily devotional list. And, when we attend mass on Sunday, we will add you and your family to our parish book of prayers.*

*Having experienced the loss of the matriarchs of both our families, we can appreciate and empathize with your sense of loss and pain. It's very difficult to say goodbye to our mothers regardless of age/health because they are so very special having brought us into the world and having nurtured us throughout our lifetimes with a special love that only a mother can provide.*

*I will always cherish my fond memories of working with Helen, Marilyn Turner, Judy, Jablonski, and Marcia Dodge in national accounts. Helen was a very dedicated and hard-working employee who always had the best interest of the company in mind. I will forever remember Helen as a very kind, gentle, caring and compassionate person.*

*May our good Lord watch over, bless, protect, comfort and console you and your family as you endure this very difficult, trying and sad time in your lives.*

*Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to you and your family in your time of loss and sorrow.*

*Rob & Veronica Sherman*

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**Robert Sherman** - June 18, 2024 at 06:24 PM



“ Just realized that not all of the eulogy posted before. Here is the end of my remarks:

*Then, of course, there was church – another throughline in my mother’s life. We were in church every Sunday – 11:15 mass. We were one of the original families at St. Mark’s and we sat right over there, taking up most of the row. My siblings and I all know the expression “mom in church eyes.” If we misbehaved in any way, all it took was that special look from Mom to let us know to straighten up and do the right thing. If we didn’t, we knew the next step was to go see Father Dwyer after mass to explain to him why we were disruptive in church. I won’t name names, but I do know what the room behind this altar looks like.*

*My mother’s strong faith was an integral part of her life. She often reminded us to live by the Golden Rule and she was a role model for us to do that. She taught us to have the courage of our convictions. She once told me that she wished she had a childlike faith that was unquestioning. My mother had a strong faith, but it wasn’t a blind faith. She believed in the power of prayer and taught us when we were young that we each had a guardian angel. Today, we know our guardian angel’s name. It’s Helen.*

*When were young, a common discussion among the neighborhood kids was whose father was the best, the strongest, etc. It usually ended with Bobby Hansen, one of the younger kids in the neighborhood, yelling out in frustration, “Oh yeah? Well, your father stinks!” If we were having that argument today, I would tell anybody there that my Dad is the best. He was my mother’s hero. He supported her, protected her, and lovingly took care of her when the ravages of dementia started to take over.*

*Our family is very grateful for all of you who are here to honor Mom today. If you want to continue to honor her, remember her legacy: love your family with all your heart, never stop learning, contribute to your community in the best way you know how and rely on your faith in the good times and bad. I can hear her humbly saying, “It was no big deal. I just figured out what was the right thing to do and did my best to accomplish it.” You did an incredible job, Mom, and we would never ask you to do more than that.*

*And, to take that old neighborhood argument a step further, if we were talking about who's mother was the best, the Harrington siblings win, hands down!*

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**Gail Hanss** - June 16, 2024 at 04:08 PM

GH

“ For those of you who were unable to attend the services for my mother, here are the remarks that I made at the funeral:

*For those of you who don't know me, I am Gail Hanss, Helen and Dick's middle child. I have strict instructions from Dad to keep this brief, so I will do my best. Time me, Dad.*

*When my son Jacob was in middle school, he was given an assignment to interview a family member and he chose my mother. One of the things she told him when he asked about her early years was that her life revolved around family, school and church. That throughline was evident right up to her dying day. As she became an adult, school was replaced by community, although she was a lifelong learner.*

*Her family was very important to Mom. She taught us to stick together and to stick up for each other. She was proud of the fact that neighborhood kids didn't pick on any of us when they found out we were a Harrington. Our parents instilled strong values in us. It was truly a revelation to me as an adult that other people measured success by how much wealth and possessions they have. Our parents raised us to measure success by being content with what we have, having solid and loving relationships and relying on our faith to endure any hardships we met along the way.*

*My mother truly loved it whenever our large family got together. She would say that there was always love, laughter and food – lots of food! She often said that other people's first thought when planning a party was, “What should we wear?”, but ours was “What should we have to eat?”*

*Mom had a sparkling sense of humor. She once was part of a bowling team at work that they named “Lightning Feet and Thunder Thighs.” She loved the humor in that. If you ever had the experience of going clothes shopping with my mother, hilarity usually ensued in the dressing room as she tried things on. As my niece Sarah put it, Mom loved “giggling at all the things!”*

*School and education were also very important to my mother. She was involved with our school lives and all of the activities that went along with it. She always told us that she expected us to do our best*

*and she would never ask us to do more than our best. Mom was an avid reader and knew long before the days of the Internet and YouTube how to find out information if she didn't know it. I think she really understood the sarcasm in Paul's letter to the Corinthians when he said, "gladly suffer fools." Mom really didn't. If she thought somebody made a comment out of ignorance, she went to work finding out what the actual information was, but not in a vindictive way. She just wanted to know. She was actually one of the least judgmental people I have ever known. Mom encouraged us to distinguish between fact and opinion and had a special way of calmly asking pointed questions during discussions. If you were taking an opposing view, this could be maddening, which seemed to make it even more enjoyable to her. She loved a good discussion. But, even after a disagreement, she was able to let bygones be bygones. Make no mistake in thinking that Mom was a pushover, though. She stood her ground and knew when to say enough was enough and walk away.*

*Mom was also very involved in her community, volunteering her time with many organizations, which were listed in her obituary. She was incredibly energetic and organized. She was willing to help anybody who needed it, even though she was very busy juggling the activities of five kids, a husband, her widowed mother, and her own activities. Mom taught us to be resourceful. When there was something we wanted to do or someplace we needed to go and we asked Mom if she could help us get there, she often told us, "If you can figure out a way to make it work with our schedule, you let me know." When we returned with a plan, she listened to our ideas and if they were reasonable, she would make it work.*

*Then, of course, there was church – a*

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**Gail Hanss** - June 14, 2024 at 08:26 PM

MA

“ Sincerely sorry for your loss. Difficult to lose your mom. Best prayers, Margaret Voce Papale

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**Margaret** - June 13, 2024 at 02:59 PM

JH

“ My Mother was my best friend, she taught me so much, to be kind as you never know what others are going through, to share, to love your brothers and sisters as they will always be your friends. We had so many adventures and fun times, she was there for my highs and lows and always, always made time for us no matter what. she helped everyone who needed it. She is missed so much my heart aches, but she is at peace now, and that give us all peace as well. we love you Mom, rest peacefully. XXOO Judy

Judy Horvath - June 12, 2024 at 02:29 PM

SD

“ Mom was the sweetest person! She always knew just what to say when any of her children or grandchildren needed someone to listen and she always had the very best advice! I could go on and on....We will miss her dearly and know she is resting in peace now. Love you so much! Your loving daughter , Susan

Susan Dolan - June 12, 2024 at 01:19 PM

RC

“ Sue &Mike so sorry to hear of your Moms passing. Condolences to your family. RoseMary&Bob Comenale

RoseMary Comenale - June 11, 2024 at 08:02 PM

FL

“ From Matt and Daria Roesch with love. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Mrs. Helen L. (Thompson) Harrington.

From Matt and Daria Roesch with love. - June 11, 2024 at 02:41 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mrs. Helen L. (Thompson) Harrington.*



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June 11, 2024 at 02:41 PM